Agenda

Yearly Meeting, November 2026

Saturday 21 November, 9.30-13.00

We expect to take a break of around 30 minutes at about 11am

1. Opening Session

   Opening worship, welcomes and introductions

2. Explanation of how business will be taken at YM
3. The work of our Yearly Meeting Trustees

   Receipt of the annual report from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

   The Yearly Meeting Treasurer and the clerks of BYM Trustees will present the annual report and financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2025.

   The minutes of the most recent BYM Trustees meeting (5-6 September 2026) have been shared on the BYM website.

   Relevant reading: Annual report; BYM Trustee minutes 5-6 September 2026

   Online preparation session will take place on:
   Monday 9 November at 6pm (note earlier than usual start time).

   To receive the report

1058.QCA.1026

4. Welcome to any visitors

from other yearly meetings and to interchurch and interfaith visitors. Our Yearly Meeting events are enriched by visitors from other yearly meetings, churches and faith and belief traditions.

5. Report of Central Nominations Committee

Nominations, releases and amendments received

The names of Friends nominated to serve on committees and groups for work outside Yearly Meeting in session can be found on the BYM website (from no later than 3 November 2026). There is therefore no need for nominees to leave the meeting.

Relevant reading: Nominations

To make the appointments and note the releases

6. Proposed changes to the Quaker marriage declaration

After detailed work by Quaker Life Central Committee, endorsed by Meeting for Sufferings, the following changes to the Quaker marriage declaration are now proposed:

1. Currently there is a choice of words with which to follow the first word of the declaration. The options are EITHER "In the presence of God" OR "In the fear of the Lord and in the presence of this assembly". There is also a choice to use neither of these phrases and to go straight on to "I take this my friend".

   The proposal is to replace these two alternatives with one single option i.e. "In the presence of God and this assembly". The option to go straight on to "I take this my friend" remains.

2. Currently there are two options for how the marriage promises are given. These are EITHER "through divine assistance" OR "with God's help".

   The proposal is to add a third option: "upheld by the Light of Love".

Yearly Meeting is asked to agree the proposed changes to the wording of the marriage declaration.

Relevant reading: Marriage declaration

We expect to spend time on this item at the online preparation session scheduled for 7pm on Thursday 5 November.

For discernment and decision

7. Annual report of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee

The Book of Discipline Revision Committee (BDRC) has been reporting annually to Meeting for Sufferings and will now report to Yearly Meeting. This time its annual report will be accompanied by the publication of the draft new book of discipline, under the working title Our Quaker Way.

The committee will report on its work to bring this draft before the Yearly Meeting. The draft will be published online over the lunch break, when hard copies will also be available for purchase at Friends House.

Relevant reading: Annual report of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee

We expect to spend time on this item at the online preparation session scheduled for 7pm on Thursday 5 November.

To receive the report

8. Update from Agenda Planning Committee

The clerk of Agenda Planning Committee will tell us about business expected to come to future Yearly Meeting sessions.

For information

Saturday 21 November, 14.00-16.30

We expect to take a break of around 20 minutes at about 15.00

9. Report of the Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees Reparation Working Group

In 2022, Yearly Meeting Minutes 27 and 33, called Friends to tell the truth about historic injustice and to consider reparation for the economy of trafficking and enslaving Africans. In 2023 the BYM Trustees responded by establishing the RWG as a four-year group to research the past, consult those living with the legacies of transatlantic enslavement and British Quaker colonialism, and recommend reparation. We have chosen accountability, not guilt. Some of us have chosen a path of self-transformation as amateur historians, seeking to understand and reckon with the past in the hope that it plants the seeds of a brighter future.

On 23 October 2026, over 200 Friends gathered at Friends House and online, for "Truth and repair – our Quaker journey towards justice". The day presented the culmination of much of the work to date of the historical and theological research workstreams. Friends questioned, worshiped and ministered sharing moving insight. Attendees left energised and ready to act.

We hope that in November 2026 Yearly Meeting will acknowledge this history and in 2027 will discern the need for an apology, identify how much money to relinquish for repair, and outline other reparative actions. We leave historical research others can build on, standards of care for researchers, and the beginnings of trust with descendants and communities beyond the RWG's laying down in December 2027.

Relevant reading: Quakers, enslavement and reparation: summary report / full report

Other resources are available on the main Reparation web page and from the Reparations resources document.

For discernment

10. Receipt of area meeting minutes

Minutes have been received from Banbury and Evesham Area Meeting and Central England Area Meeting, requesting permission for Banbury and Evesham AM to lay itself down, with all its remaining local meetings being transferred to Central England Area Meeting.

A minute has been received from the Joint London Area Meeting, which is a joint meeting of the seven area meetings in London. These area meetings are asking permission to lay themselves down to form a single area meeting to be known as Quakers in London.

All three of these minutes come before Yearly Meeting in accordance with *Quaker faith & practice* 4.12. This responsibility was held by Meeting for Sufferings and has now been passed to Yearly Meeting.

Relevant reading: Minutes received from area meetings

For discernment and decision

11. Minor amendments to *Quaker faith & practice*

Only Yearly Meeting can approve changes to the text of *Quaker faith & practice*. Church Government Advisory Group is recommending amendments as follows:

- Changes relating to Crynwr Cymru – Quakers in Wales
- Changes relating to Quaker Life Representative Council
- Changes relating to the Annual Conference of Treasurers

The proposed new text has been available on the BYM website since early September. Anyone wishing to share concerns or questions in advance of Yearly Meeting should do so via email to rco@quaker.org.uk.

If no issues are raised then this matter will be taken on draft minute at the Yearly Meeting session in November.

Relevant reading: Changes to Quaker faith & practice (this paper shows the proposed new text only) and/or Changes to Quaker faith & practice appendix (this paper shows the old and new text side by side) - these documents have been on the YM website since 28 August 2026.

For discernment and decision

12. Court and prison register

The names of Friends who have been before the courts for matters of conscience are submitted for entry into the court and prison register.

Relevant reading: Court and prison register

For discernment and decision

13. Closing worship

Joined by the children and young people's programmes (to include receipt of any minutes that may be brought from these programmes).

All Yearly Meeting documents in advance can be downloaded from our website.

Scan the QR code to visit:
www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents